

JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND JOB SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF BANK EMPLOYEES

YASMIN JANJHUA¹, RASHMI CHAUDHARY² & SILKY VERMA³

²¹Assistant Professor, Department of Business Management, College of Horticulture, Dr YS Parmar University of
Horticulture & Forestry, Nauni, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, India

³Department of Business Management, College of Horticulture, Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry,
Nauni, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is an important aspect that has persistently drawn the attention of the researchers and practitioners. The satisfied employees are more likely to show better performance, engaged in less workplace deviant behaviors. The characteristics of the job that is performed by the job incumbent determines the feeling of satisfaction besides other factors. In the present study the response of bank employees on the core dimensions of the job being performed by them has been examined. The association of demographic variables with the job characteristics has been assessed and the relationship of job characteristics with job satisfaction has been investigated. The findings have shown that employees agree that their job is enriched with the skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback and autonomy. However, as compared to other dimensions employees have revealed that they experience lesser degree of autonomy in their job. The influence of demographic variables on job characteristics have shown mixed results. The results have further shown that job characteristics i.e. skill variety, task significance, task identity and feedback have shown positive significant relationship with job satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Job Satisfaction, Job Characteristics, Organizational Commitment, Motivating Potential Score

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Work determines a person's worth and place in society and it influences one's psychological identity and sense of well being. The employees spent major part of their day at their work place, thus the type of the job and the work environment has a paramount influence on the employees' life and job satisfaction. It has been noted that organizations are more productive when employees are happy with their work (Spector, 2000). It is important that employee should be passionate for job rather than have a feeling of compulsion. There are many factors both external and internal that determine the extent of job satisfaction and persistent motivation to work. Job satisfaction has been variedly described by the researchers and practitioners. Job satisfaction is amount of pleasure or contentment associated with one's job (Andrew, 1998). Job satisfaction refers to person feelings of satisfaction in the job, which acts as a motivation to work (Brief and Weiss, 2002; Robbins, 2005; Gupta and Joshi, 2008). Researchers have also explained job satisfaction as cognitive, affective (Cranny *et al*, 1992) and behavioral responses to one's job (Hulin and Judge, 2003). Job satisfaction is generally described as a multifaceted construct that includes employee feelings about a variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic job elements (Howard and Frink,

1996; Wayne, 2006). The studies have reported that employees who are satisfied with their jobs have higher organizational commitment (Williams and Anderson, 1991; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Testa, 2001; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Mohammed and Eleswed, 2013), exhibit higher levels of performance and productivity (Steinhaus and Perry, 1996).

The characteristics of an individual's job to a greater extent determine his/her satisfaction with the job. The design of work has an enormous impact on organizational success and individual well-being (Morgeson and Campion, 2003). Job characteristics are objective characteristics of jobs, particularly the degree to which jobs are designed so that they enhance the internal work motivation and the job satisfaction of job incumbents (Hackman and Oldham, 1974). Job characteristics model have been noted to be one of the best methods of job enrichment which subsequently leads to job satisfaction (Yen *et al.*, 2007). Hackman and Oldham's (1974) job characteristics model suggested that if five core job characteristics specified as determinants of three 'critical psychological states' i.e. experienced meaningfulness (skill variety, task identity and task significance), experienced responsibility (autonomy) and knowledge of results (feedback) are present in a job, the job incumbent will be more likely to have high internal work motivation, high quality and performance, high satisfaction with the work and low absenteeism and turnover. The five core job characteristics can be combined to form a motivating potential score for a job, which can be used as an index of how likely a job is to affect an employee's attitudes and behaviors. Work characteristics have been found to result in psychological empowerment resulting in work satisfaction (Liden *et al.*, 2000). Various research studies have found that there is a significant relationship between the job characteristics i.e. autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task identity and task significance, and job satisfaction (Anderson, 1984; Colarelli *et al.*, 1987; Said and Munap, 2011; Ali *et al.*, 2013). A positive and significant effect of job characteristics on job satisfaction has been noted in the studies (Bhuidan and Menguc, 2002; Glisson and Durick, 1998; Mahenthiran Aloysius, 1998; Djastuti, 2010).

A strong positive influence between job autonomy, job variety and job feedback with job satisfaction have been reported in a study (Katsikea *et al.*, 2011). According to Hunter (2006) four job characteristics (task significance, task variety, task identity and feedback) served as significant positive predictors of job satisfaction. In a study task identity emerged to be the most important positive predictor of job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation (Hadi and Adil, 2010; Anjum, 2014) whereas extrinsic motivation was predicted by feedback (Hadi and Adil, 2010). An important dimension of job characteristics i.e. recognition for good work (feedback) was found to be an important factor of satisfaction (Matubber and Miah, 2001). The job characteristics variables have shown statistically significant correlation with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Allen *et al.*, 2004). The characteristics of the job performed by the job incumbent determine the extent of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the job. Henceforth, it is important for the managers to design the jobs in lieu of these job characteristics so that job incumbents feel more satisfied with their jobs resulting in lesser absenteeism and turnover and increase organizational commitment and psychological well being. In similar vein, the present study has been conducted to assess the response of job incumbents pertaining to job characteristics and relationship of job characteristics with job satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has investigated the response of bank employees on the attributes of their job. The association of employees' demographics with job characteristics and relationship of job characteristics and job satisfaction has also been examined.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the present study were 60 bank employees working in private and public sector banks in Solan in Himachal Pradesh. The findings in (Table 1) indicated that 60% of the respondents were males and 40% females; majority i.e. 51.7% were of (20-30 years) of age, followed by 35% who fall in the age group of (30-40 years) and 13.3% of the respondents belonged to the oldest age group (40 years and above), further data showed that 51.7% of participants were married while 48.3% were unmarried. As revealed majority of the respondents 56.7% have (0-5 years) of experience followed by 30.0% of the respondents who have (6-10 years) of experience and remaining 13.3% have experience of (10 years and above).

MEASURES

Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The Hackman and Oldham (1976) job diagnostic survey questionnaire which consisted of 23 items was used to elicit the response of the participants on the core dimensions of the job i.e. skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. The response of the participants on each item of the corresponding job dimension was scored on 5 point Likert Scale. The job satisfaction was analysed through the response of the participants on the items, "I am satisfied with my job", "I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The mean values are above average for all the job dimensions (see Table 2). However the employees have shown highest mean value to task significance ($M=3.94$). It can also be noted that comparatively lower mean has been given by the employees for autonomy ($M=3.62$). Thus it can be concluded that the employees feel that their job is characterized by higher degree of task significance and task identity. They also feel that they are able to use different skills and talents. However, comparatively lesser feeling of autonomy is found to persist among employees. As indicated by higher mean value i.e. ($M=4.00$) in the (Table 3) it can be said that job satisfaction among employees is high. The mean values by both males and females have been noted to be above average for all the job characteristics (see Table 4). However, the males have given highest mean value to task identity ($M=3.98$) and lowest to autonomy ($M=3.63$). On the other hand females have given highest mean value to task significance ($M=3.91$) and the lowest mean value to autonomy ($M=3.61$). It can also be noted that males as compared to females have given higher mean values to the majority of the dimensions. Thus, it can be concluded that males employees feel that their job enable them to identify with the job and it gives feeling of happiness whereas females feel that their job is valuable and significantly impact the life of others. However, both males and females feel that there is lesser degree of freedom in their job. The t values have shown that effect of gender on mean difference pertaining to job characteristics have been noted to be insignificant.

The findings as indicated in (Table 5) have shown that both the groups have obtained values above average for all the components of job. It can be observed that married as well as unmarried employees have shown highest mean values to task significance with means ($M=3.79$) and ($M=4.08$) respectively. The findings also showed that married respondents have given lowest mean value to feedback ($M=3.54$) while unmarried for the job dimension autonomy ($M=3.64$). It can be noted that unmarried respondents as compared to married have given higher mean value to the majority of the job dimensions. Further the results showed that the effect of marital status on the mean difference analysis of employees towards job dimensions have been found to be significant for feedback ($t=-3.45$; $p<0.01$), skill variety ($t=-3.36$; $p<0.01$)

and task significance ($t=-2.15$; $p<0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that married employees as compared to unmarried experience higher degree of task significance, task identity, autonomy, feedback and skill variety. It was observed (see Table 6) that youngest (20-30years) and middle aged group (30-40years) has given highest mean value to task significance with mean values ($M=3.86$) and ($M=4.06$) respectively. The results also revealed that the eldest group of employees have obtained highest mean value for skill variety ($M=4.10$) and lowest for task identity ($M=3.62$). The results have also shown that mean difference among the different age groups have been noted to be significant for feedback ($F=3.004$; $p<0.05$). The results (see Table 7) have shown that task significance ($M=3.84$) followed by task identity ($M=3.83$) was rated highest by the employees having experience of (0-5years). However, skill variety ($M=4.05$) and task significance ($M=4.00$) was given highest ratings by the employees who fall within (6-10 years) of experience group. Further, it can be noted that employees whose experience exceeds (10 years) have rated task significance ($M=4.25$) highest followed by feedback ($M=4.06$). The results have shown that mean difference among different experience group of employees pertaining to job dimensions have been noted to be significant for skill variety ($F=3.063$; $p<0.05$). It can be noted (see Table 8) that there is a significant positive relationship of job characteristics i.e. skill variety ($r=.301$; $p<0.05$); feedback ($r=.470$; $p<0.01$); task significance ($r=.424$; $p<0.01$), task identity ($r=.427$; $p<0.01$) with job satisfaction. Hence it can be concluded that higher the job enriched with task significance, task identity, skill variety and feedback higher will be the job satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

From the foregoing discussion it can be concluded that job incumbents feel that their jobs are enriched with skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback and are satisfied with their jobs. So far as association with demographic variables is concerned it can be said that males as compared to females have higher feeling of experiencing the core job dimensions as compared to females, both groups feel that there is lesser degree of freedom in their job. On the basis of mean values with respect to marital status it can be concluded that married employees as compared to unmarried employees experience higher degree of task significance, task identity, autonomy, feedback and skill variety. It can be concluded that lowest and highest experienced group of employees feel that their job has a significant impact on people around, thus having a sense of being able to contribute towards society. However, lowest mean values to autonomy by employees belonging to experience group (6-10 years) and (above 10 years) indicates that they do not feel free to take decisions and experience lesser freedom. The least experience group of employees feel that they are not provided regular feedback related to their performance. The results indicating the association of demographics with job characteristics have shown mixed response showing the significant effect of marital status for the job dimensions skill variety, task significance and feedback; age on job characteristics task significance only and job experience on skill variety, while gender had no significant effect on mean difference pertaining to job characteristics. Findings have indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between all the job dimensions and job satisfaction, except autonomy. Thus, it can be concluded that more the job is enriched with task significance, task identity, skill variety and feedback higher will be the job satisfaction.

It is suggested the employees should be given greater freedom to take decisions regarding planning and scheduling their task. If the degree of autonomy is increased the employees are made responsible and accountable for their performance and this will also reduce control and supervision. The managers/supervisors should provide regular feedback to the employees related to their performance. The feedback should be constructive and should be provided in a manner which boosts the morale of the employees. It was noted that the employees experience higher degree of task identity and

task significance in their jobs. Thus, the organizations need to take into consideration these factors during restructuring and reengineering of jobs as these dimensions have been significantly correlated to job satisfaction. The organizations need to redesign the jobs in such a manner that employees not only feel their jobs to be meaningful but also feel that their skills and talents are being properly utilized. Being able to take work related decisions freely gives psychological satisfaction to the employees. Moreover, if timely and proper feedback is given to the employees it has a significant impact on the quality of their work and also enhances learning and development of employees.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants

Demographic	Percentage
Gender	
Male	60
Female	40
Age (in years)	
20-30	51.7
30-40	35.0
40 and above	13.3
Marital Status	
Married	51.7
Unmarried	48.3
Job Experience (in years)	
0-5	56.7
5-10	30.0
10 and above	13.3

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, S.D.) Showing Employees' Response on Job Characteristics

Job characteristics	Mean	S.D
Skill Variety	3.84	.50
Autonomy	3.62	.83
Task Significance	3.94	.54
Feedback	3.73	.45
Task Identity	3.87	.61

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, S.D.) Showing Level of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction	Mean	S.D
	4.00	.55

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, S.D., T Values) Showing Gender Wise Employees' Response on Job Characteristics

Job Characteristics	Males		Females		t
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Skill Variety	3.81	.49	3.88	.52	-.499
Autonomy	3.63	.90	3.61	.73	-.125
Task Significance	3.96	.60	3.91	.45	.321
Feedback	3.81	.43	3.62	.47	1.569
Task Identity	3.98	.57	3.70	.64	1.743

*p<0.01, **p<0.05

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, S.D., T Values) Showing Employees' Response on Job Characteristics W.R.T. Marital Status

Job characteristics	Married		Unmarried		t
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Skill Variety	3.63	.41	4.03	.50	-3.63*
Autonomy	3.60	.88	3.64	.79	-.16
Task Significance	3.79	.53	4.08	.52	-2.15**
Feedback	3.54	.35	3.91	.47	-3.54*
Task Identity	3.77	.60	3.96	.61	-1.21

*p<0.01, **p<0.05

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, S.D., F Values) Showing Employees' Response on Job Characteristics W.R.T. Age

Job Characteristics /Age (in years)	20-30 years		30-40 years		40 years above		F
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Skill Variety	3.72	.44	3.92	.54	4.10	.53	2.294
Autonomy	3.64	.88	3.46	.81	4.00	.61	1.234
Task Significance	3.86	.50	4.06	.47	3.95	.82	.878
Feedback	3.66	.42	3.70	.40	4.09	.61	3.004**
Task Identity	3.83	.58	4.02	.67	3.62	.51	1.345

*p<0.01, **p<0.05

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, S.D., F Values) Showing Employees' Response on Job Characteristics W.R.T. Job Experience

Job characteristics / Experience	0-5 years		6-10 years		10 years above		F
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Skill Variety	3.71	.47	4.05	.517	3.92	.45	3.063**
Autonomy	3.64	.87	3.61	.72	3.58	.98	.023
Task Significance	3.84	.47	4.00	.57	4.25	.68	2.023
Feedback	3.65	.41	3.75	.46	4.06	.51	2.719
Task Identity	3.83	.56	3.94	.80	3.87	.35	.171

*p<0.01, **p<0.05

Table 8: Correlation between the Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction

Job Characteristics	Job Satisfaction
Skill Variety	.301*
Autonomy	.246
Feedback	.470**
Task Significance	.424**
Task Identity	.427**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).